

THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL'S COURT ACCESS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

PURPOSE

The Court Access and Community Relations Committee will address barriers to access to the courts and legal services in Maryland; strengthen public awareness of the Judiciary's programs, projects, services and initiatives, and promote knowledge and understanding of the Judiciary.

SCOPE OF ACTIVITY

The Court Access and Community Relations Committee will oversee the expansion of opportunities for greater access to the judicial system through increased funding, improved planning, and coordination in legal service delivery, expanded interpretation services, and reduced barriers to access. The Committee will ensure increased knowledge and understanding of the Judiciary through various means, such as publications, community/school partnerships, and speakers' bureau engagements. The Committee will also strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the Judiciary through initiatives that heighten public awareness, as well as transparency through means such as access to court records with improved court reporting policies and procedures. The Committee will report on its initiatives and other activities, at least annually, to the Judicial Council.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Honorable Larnzell Martin, Jr., Chair
Circuit Court for Prince George's County

NAME	TERM
Hon. Pamela J. White, <i>Vice-Chair</i> , Circuit Court, Baltimore City	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2016
Mary J. Abrams, District Court, Baltimore City	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015
Hon. Pamela J. Brown, District Court, Howard County	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2016
Hon. Audrey J. S. Carrion, Circuit Court, Baltimore City	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2016
Hon. Oliver John Cejka, District Court, Frederick County	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015
Hon. Jeannie Eun Kyung Cho, District Court, Montgomery County	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015
Hon. Yolanda Curtin, Circuit Court, Harford County	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2016
S. Michael Esposito, District Court, Baltimore County	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2016
Douglas Hofstedt, Circuit Court, Anne Arundel County	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015
Hon. M. Kenneth Long, Jr., Circuit Court, Washington County	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015
Hon. Douglas R. M. Nazarian, Court of Special Appeals	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015
Hon. Karen Murphy Jensen, Circuit Court, Caroline County	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2016
Hon. Paula A. Price, District Court, Somerset County	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015
Hon. Devy Patterson Russell, District Court, Baltimore City	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2016
Hon. Mark F. Scurti, District Court, Baltimore City	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2016
Hon. Beverly J. Woodard, Circuit Court, Prince George's County	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015
Hon. Joseph L. Wright, District Court, Prince George's County	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2016
Hon. Sharon Hancock, Circuit Court, Charles County	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015
Angelita Plemmer-Williams, <i>Staff</i>	
Pamela Cardullo Ortiz, <i>Staff</i>	

SUBCOMMITTEES

NAME: COMMUNITY RELATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

NATURE AND PURPOSE

The focus of this Subcommittee is ensuring that effective channels exist for meaningful opportunities for the Judiciary, stakeholders and citizens to exchange views and remain current as to the operations of the Judiciary, accessing resources, new initiatives and means by which those within the Judiciary and those affected by its operations can inform the Judiciary of matters of community concern. The Subcommittee's focus will include enhancing communication within the Judiciary among all members and employees of the Judiciary.

This Subcommittee will

- Collaborate with the Office of Communications and Public Affairs ("OCPA") to ensure consistent and active messaging within the Judiciary and from the Judiciary to the public and other stakeholders;
- Identify stakeholders for the purposes of messaging, marketing and branding, public educations and community awareness and information sharing.
- Survey judges as to successful community and school programs, joint Bench-Bar programs, and other successful collaborative projects in which they have been involved or have familiarity and publish information as to these programs to other judges;
- Develop creative outreach programs, which may include replication of programs and projects identified by the survey of judges;
- Advise staff on strategies and development for various communications channels and web presences for educating and interacting with the public including, electronic/social media, newsletter, public relations, digital media, website and printed collateral;
- Develop tools for evaluation of the level of satisfaction of citizens and other stakeholders with their interaction with the Judiciary whether in court or outside the court;
- Develop a robust Speakers Bureau Program that permits organizations and agencies to easily access members of the Judiciary for speaking engagements and to understand necessary parameters, as well as to that speakers have information that will be responsive to nature of a speaker engagement;
- Create materials for judges to better market and brand the Judiciary, as well as increase public education efforts;
- Develop and implement strategies for partnership with State, local and specialty bar associations in educating citizens about the Law and the Judiciary, including joint efforts as an element of the Speakers Bureau Program; and
- Examine whether there should be a Bench-Bar Subcommittee.

MEMBERSHIP¹

Hon. Pamila J. Brown, *Chair*
Hon. Oliver John Cejka
Hon. Beverly J. Woodard
Hon. Joseph L. Wright

¹ It is contemplated that Judges Martin and White, as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Court Access and Community Relations Committee, will serve as *ex officio* members of each subcommittee.

ANTICIPATED WORK PRODUCT

It is anticipated that the Subcommittee will produce:

- A communications plan.
- Editorial standards for Judiciary publications
- Speaker's Bureau Program
- Resources for speaking engagements
- Newsletters
- Surveys and other Evaluation Tools

EXPECTED DURATION

Indefinite.

NAME: LANGUAGE ACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE

NATURE AND PURPOSE

The Language Access Subcommittee will develop initiatives to enhance access to the courts and the justice system for persons who face language and cultural barriers to meaningful opportunities for accessing the court and for meaningful participation in court proceedings.

This Subcommittee will:

- Collaborate with the Court Interpreter Program and the Access to Justice Department in the examination of issues and development of initiatives related to language access;
- Develop resources to aid persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or from different cultural backgrounds, to aid them in understanding and navigating Maryland courts;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Judiciary's language access initiatives;
- Work to enhance the resources necessary to ensure our courts can meet the language access needs of all Marylanders who use the courts;
- Evaluate educational and other resources of the Judiciary to ensure that officials and employees of the Judiciary have the opportunity to become more culturally competent;
- Work to enhance educational and other resources to ensure that officials and employees of the Judiciary can identify and most appropriately respond to cultural barriers to meaningful access to and participation in court proceedings; and
- Develop and implement strategies for engagement of State, local and specialty bar associations in identification of the needs of LEPs and those for whom cultural barriers exist, making resources available to those populations to aid in their meaningful access to and participation in court proceedings and educating the Judiciary, Bar and those populations.

MEMBERSHIP

Hon. Audrey J. S. Carrion, *Chair*
Hon. Jeannie Eun Kyung Cho
Hon. Yolanda L. Curtin

ANTICIPATED WORK PRODUCT

It is anticipated that the Subcommittee will produce:

- Guidelines for language access and the Court Interpreter Program.
- Translated materials.
- Print, digital and multimedia tools for persons with LEP.
- Information about the Judiciary for persons from various cultures.
- Evaluations of language access and cultural barrier removal initiatives.

EXPECTED DURATION

Indefinite.

NAME: SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANT SUBCOMMITTEE

NATURE AND PURPOSE

The Self-Represented Litigant Subcommittee will identify and recommend implementation of changes to ensure that Maryland courts are accessible for use by self-represented litigants and to ensure that low-income and vulnerable persons are knowledgeable of resources for representation by counsel.

This Subcommittee will:

- Collaborate with the Access to Justice Department in the examination of issues and the development of initiatives to ensure a comprehensive strategy for ensuring our courts are accessible to all, regardless of representational status;
- Oversee the development of written and multimedia resources to address the needs of persons without counsel;
- Develop standards for oversight and guidance to the Judiciary's network of self-help centers, and for the expansion of those resources as appropriate;
- Guide the development and maintenance of forms designed for use by the self-represented;
- Maintain and build relationships with State, local and specialty bar associations, along with other key justice partners to help support access to legal help for low-income and vulnerable Marylanders;
- Support the Judiciary's efforts to enhance pro bono practice by coordinating with the Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Service, and identifying and supporting appropriate legal services innovations that enhance access to the courts;
- Work to enhance the resources necessary to aid the courts in their efforts to remain accessible to persons without counsel and those of limited means;
- Explore and create collaborative programs with State, local and specialty bar associations and community organizations to educate the public on legal representation resources available for low-income and vulnerable persons;
- Survey and evaluate the extent to which persons who are incarcerated or for whom actual physical appearance in court would pose a hardship are able to participate in proceedings by alternative means and make appropriate recommendations on the basis of the evaluation; and

- Review special challenges related to accessing certain Court records by self-represented litigants and communication to self-represented litigants standards that are understood by attorneys.

MEMBERSHIP

Hon. Mark F. Scurti, Chair
 Hon. Karen Murphy Jensen
 Hon. M. Kenneth Long, Jr.
 Hon. Douglas R. M. Nazarian
 Hon. Paula A. Price

ANTICIPATED WORK PRODUCT

It is anticipated the Subcommittee will produce:

- A comprehensive strategy for responding to self-represented litigants
- Print, digital and multimedia tools to aid the self-represented
- Resources to aid courts in serving the self-represented
- A statewide network of self-help centers
- Guidelines for the creation, review and regular updating of forms that are available for self-represented litigants
- Surveys and other Evaluation Tools

EXPECTED DURATION

Indefinite

WORKGROUP

NAME: LEGISLATIVE REVIEW WORKGROUP

PURPOSE:

This workgroup will review and monitor legislation that impacts court access issues.

MEMBERSHIP

Hon. Mark F. Scurti, *Chair*
 Hon. Pamela J. Brown
 Hon. Audrey J. S. Carrion
 Hon. Pamela J. White

EXPECTED DURATION

90 days (January – April)